

REMARKS

Claims 1-31 are pending in the present application. By this amendment, claim 1 is amended and claims 15-31 are added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present claims in view of the following remarks.

I. Prior Art Rejections

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 5,907,324 to Larson et al. (hereinafter "Larson"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As amended, claim 1 recites that a method of automatically establishing a conference comprises receiving conference logistics and participant profile data; allocating a conference bridge port in accordance with the conference logistics; dialing a telephone number in accordance with the conference logistics and the profile data; playing an option to accept or refuse a connection to the conference; and connecting a communications switch port to the allocated conference bridge port.

Larson does not disclose a method of automatically establishing a conference comprising playing an option to accept or refuse a connection to the conference. On the contrary, Larson discloses a method of saving, retrieving, and establishing a plurality of conference parameters that establishes a conference environment by calling the conference participants and opening the documents and policies relevant to the specific conference. Thus, unlike the method of automatically establishing a conference of the present invention, Larson fails to disclose playing an option to accept or refuse a connection to the conference, which gives a participant the choice of joining or declining connection to the conference.

For at least these reasons, claim 1 is allowable over Larson. Since claims 2-14 depend from claim 1 and recite additional features, Applicants respectfully submit that Larson does not anticipate Applicants' claimed invention as embodied in claims 2-14 for at least these reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

II. New Claims 15-31:

New claims 15-31 recite further features of Applicants' claimed invention. Support for new claims 15-17 and 31 may be found at page 7, lines 1-9 (claims 15 and 31) and page 11, line 24 to page 12, line 3 (claims 16-17). New claims 18-30 are similar to claims 2-14 and are supported by claims 2-14.

New claim 15 depends from independent claim 1, and new claims 17-31 depend from new claim 16. Applicants respectfully submit that new claims 15-31 are patentable over the art of record for at least the reasons given above.

Kindly charge Deposit Account No. 13-2725 in the amount of \$198.00 representing the cost for the addition of 11 new claims over 20.

CONCLUSION

For at least these reasons, Applicants assert that the pending claims 1-31 are in condition for allowance. The Applicants further assert that this response addresses each and every point of the Office Action, and respectfully requests that the Examiner pass this application with claims 1-31 to allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions, please contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at 404.954.5037.

Respectfully submitted,

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Version with Markings for Specification Amendments

Please replace the paragraph from page 6, lines 6-20 with the following replacement paragraph:

Referring now to the drawings, in which like numerals indicate like elements throughout the several figures, Fig. 1 illustrates an exemplary hardware environment for establishing an automatic conference call, according to an embodiment of the present invention. In one embodiment, a conference call is automatically established using a call-log. The term “communication” is used herein to include all calls that may be exchanged between a caller and a called party in the system illustrated in Fig. 1. A subscribing party 105, who has subscribed to an automatic conference call service, is in communication with a first attendee 106, a second attendee 107, a third attendee 108, and a fourth attendee [125] 115. The subscribing party 105, and attendees 106, 107, and 108, are communicating with each other using communication devices, such as landline telephones. Attendee [125] 115 is also participating in the conference call using a mobile phone, which is connected to a cellular network [126] 116. A device, such as a caller ID box 110, may be installed on the subscriber’s line, such as that shown for subscriber 105, which is operable for inputting caller information into a call-log displayed on the subscriber’s 105 communications device.

Please replace the paragraph from page 10, line 28 to page 11, line 2 with the following replacement paragraph:

There are six main software components shown in the exemplary embodiment of Fig. 2. In an exemplary embodiment, these software components execute on the SN control computer [225] 125 and include a provisioning module 200, a scheduler 225, a conference control manager (CCM) 230, a bridge port allocator 235, an auto-dialer 240, and a conference connector 250.

Please replace the paragraph from page 12, lines 4-10 with the following replacement paragraph:

The scheduler 225 creates a conference message for each conference record stored in a conference container at the time [of] a record is processed. Three types of conference messages are created. Type one indicates that a conference is to be immediately established (i.e., with no delay between set up and connection). Type two indicates that a conference is to be set up (i.e., only allocate conference bridge ports). Type three indicates that a previously set up conference is to be connected (i.e., connect all conference participants) to the conference session.

Please replace the paragraph from page 24, lines 4- 15 with the following replacement paragraph:

As stated above, an AIN service node [130] 120 retrieves selected invitee directory numbers from the subscriber's call-log through the provisioning module 200, places calls to those invitees automatically, and connects those invitees to the already established conference bridge. The service node [130] 120 is programmed to receive the selected invitee numbers selected by the subscriber, and to establish connections to the invitees. The service node [130] 120 provides the communication with the subscriber and all selected invitees by ringing the invitees using the displayed call-log directory numbers. If the invitee's directory number is a wireless number, the service node [130] 120 routes the call to a wireless network so as to reach the wireless unit in a manner well known to those skilled in the art. After the service node [130] 120 makes the calls to all numbers involved, the service node [130] 120 then bridges or connects these calls to the already established bridge, so as to set-up a conference call.

Please replace the paragraph from page 24, line 24 to page 25, line 2 with the following replacement paragraph:

As stated above, in Fig. 1, the preferred environment of the present invention includes a telecommunications system that includes a PSTN 100, and may in some cases include a wireless network [126] 116. The terminating equipment in a wireless network receives communications through radio signals rather than through wires or optics. A cellular telephone network is an example of a wireless network. Thus, a conference call participant's communication means may include a cellular telephone, a mobile telephone, a mobile station, a portable telephone, and other devices that receive communications through radio signals.

Please replace the paragraph on page 25, lines 3-17 with the following replacement paragraph:

As is well known to those skilled in the art, the PSTN 100 is connected to the wireless network [126] 116 through an access tandem. The connection of the PSTN 100 to the wireless network [126] 116 through an access tandem (or similar network element) allows for the interconnection of these two communication systems. Such interconnection is necessary so that a call from a wireline unit such as a telephone may be connected to a wireless unit such as a mobile telephone. The wireless network includes a geographic radio service area divided into cells, with each cell being generally serviced by a broadcast antenna which permits communications between a wireless unit operating within the area of the cell and a cell control. The cell control, in turn, is connected to a wireless network switch, which is also referred to as the mobile switching center. The wireless network switch communicates with the cell control either through dedicated telephone facilities, or, through cell-to-mobile-switching center data link. The wireless network switch tracks the location of wireless units associated with the switch, and is able to provide information with respect to the location and/or availability of any particular communication device.

Please replace the paragraph from page 26, line 17 to page 27, line 3 with the following replacement paragraph:

Referring again to Fig. 10, the mobile phone 1000 displays the call-log on the LCD display 1001. The user of the phone activates the telephone keys to control the operation of the mobile phone 1000. For example, the user activates the dialpad keys 1003 to dial a telephone number for an outgoing telephone call. The user may scroll through the call-log and select desired conference call participants. In one embodiment, when a subscriber selects a conference participant, the <select key> 1004 is activated which stores the selected party's directory information. When all parties to the conference call have been selected, the user activates the <conference key> 1006, from above, to initiate a conference call. In an alternative embodiment, the conference call feature of the present invention is selected using a feature key, which may perform multiple functions on the telephone. Any key on a PIM may be programmed to carry out a <select key> 1004 and/or <conference key> 1006 function. The subscriber interface detects the activation of the conference feature, and reports selected key activations to the PSTN 100 or PBX [126] 116. In addition, the user interface generates messages to the LCD display 1001, such as a message indicating that a conference call is in progress and indicating the number and personal identification of the parties involved in the call. A further feature may include a time quantity displayed, indicating a real-time measurement of the time involved in a conference call.

Version with Markings for Claim Amendments

Please replace claim 1 with the following replacement claim:

1. (Amended) A method of automatically establishing a conference comprising the steps of:

receiving conference logistics;

receiving participant profile data;

allocating a conference bridge port in accordance with the conference logistics;

dialing a telephone number in accordance with the conference logistics and the profile data;

after dialing the telephone number, playing an option to accept or refuse a connection to the conference; and

connecting a communications switch port to the allocated conference bridge port.